

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/851,946
Response dated February 11, 2004
Reply to OA of November 12, 2003

REMARKS

Claim 1 is pending in this application. No amendment has been made herein.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Thiessen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,297,657). (Office Action paragraph no. 2)

The rejection of claim 1 is respectfully traversed and reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Examiner cites probes 26 and 28 in Thiessen et al. (column 3, line 18) as corresponding to the “probes drooping vertically” in claim 1. Mounting block 30 (column 3, line 35) is cited as corresponding to the main substrate, and probing device 40 (column 4, line 3) is taken as the probe support. Mounting block 30 is indicated to be parallel to probing device 40.

The Examiner has taken upper die member 42 and lower die member 44 as corresponding to the upper guide plate and lower guide plate. The Examiner states that:

“lower guide plate (44) is composed of a plurality of laminated substrates (44, 58,56), and said plurality of substrates (44, 56, 58) can be separated one by one from the lowest layer to keep a necessary length of a leading end contact part of probes in case of wear.”

In traversing the rejection, Applicants note first of all that probes 26 and 28 in the reference, taken by the Examiner as the “probes drooping vertically”, do not appear to droop vertically from the mounting block 30. Rather, the top of the probes 26 and 28 are exposed heads 26b (column 3, line 38). This does not meet the limitation of claim 1.

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Secondly, with regard to the “plurality of laminated substrates (44, 56, 58)”, Thiessen et al. in column 5, lines 1-11, states:

“FIG. 6 illustrates another variation of the invention having two coatings applied to the Invar upper and lower die substrates 42, 44 with patterns of holes 43, 45 respectively previously described. An inner insulating coating of aluminum oxide or other suitable dielectric material such as tantalum oxide, or silicon dioxide is shown at 56 providing insulation for the conductive core. While aluminum oxide is a good insulating material, it does not provide the proper lubricity for allowing the probe pins to slide. Therefore an additional coating of anti-stick film indicated by reference number 58 is applied on the outside of the aluminum oxide coating.”

That is, reference numeral 44 is an Invar lower die substrate, reference numeral 56 is an inner insulating coating, and reference numeral 58 is an additional coating of anti-stick film. These layers may be seen in Figure 6 of the reference on the lower surface of lower die member 44.

Applicants respectfully argue that it is clear that layers 56 and 58 are permanent coating layers that cannot be “separated one by one” from the bottom of lower die substrate 44. These layers therefore do not meet the limitation of claim 1 and the reference cannot anticipate claim 1.

It is also clear that if layers 56 and 58 were somehow removed from lower die substrate 44, Thiessen’s device would be missing critical elements and would not function. Therefore, there is no suggestion in this teaching of Thiessen for the “can be separated one by one” limitation of claim 1.

Applicants also note that, although not specifically cited by the Examiner, Figure 4 of the reference illustrates lower die member 50 as being composed of metal foils of Invar which are stacked in a laminated structure and also having the insulating and anti-stick coatings (column 4,

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lines 40-50). Here, the laminated foils are held together by adhesive, and it is similarly clear that these layers cannot be separated one by one, and if removed would not yield a working device.

Applicants therefore submit that claim 1 is not anticipated by and, further, is non-obvious over Thiessen et al.

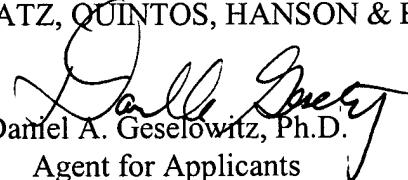
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If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants undersigned agent at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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